

February 3, 2009

To Who It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to express my concern about the dramatic downturn in the abundance of herring within SE Alaska . I have lived in SE Alaska since 1973 and during this period I have witnessed a dramatic decline in herring stocks from the Kah Shakes area near Ketchikan to Auke Bay in Juneau to all areas within SE Alaska. I have also noticed a dramatic increase in whale populations through out SE Alaska which appears to correspond with the decline in herring stocks through out the region. I am concerned that the decline in herring populations will impact the survival of salmon from all sections of SE Alaska (including the Ketchikan Area) as they migrate through their feeding grounds from the outside waters of SE Alaska (i.e. Sitka, etc) through to the inside waters of SE Alaska as they return to spawn.

In addition, I am concerned that the downturn in herring stocks will force predators such as seals, sea lions, etc to become more aggressive in feeding on out migrating juvenile salmon and steelhead as well as adults of these species as they return to their natal streams.

Sincerely:



Steve Hoffman

Retired Sport Fish biologist (area wide) ADF&G

PO Box 7064

Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

2/8/08

Andy,

First let me commend you on your untiring efforts on this extremely important Herring issue in Southeast Alaska. Without people like you and those of us who actually see and know what has happened to the herring stocks this issue would go unnoticed given our current political and economical status.

Having been born and raised in Southeast Alaska and commercially fished for 40 plus years I feel quite qualified to tell you that since the harvesting of herring eggs on kelp back in the 1960's thru to the **huge** sac-roe seine fishery and gillnet herring fishery now I have seen the stocks go from catching herring between the finger floats as a child with your hands to hardly seeing a herring ever!

The King Salmon I catch now in the winter have little or no herring in them, mostly young cod, krill, or shrimp. What a drastic difference from the old days when every King Salmon you caught came up so plugged full of herring that they were spitting them out of their mouths. Furthermore, we now have to go much further and fish much longer to catch fewer kings than we used to catch. To put it simply, and using common sense, if you want to wipe out a species, all you have to do is target the eggs [babies]!!!

Hey you know what! That is what Hitler wanted to do!!!!!!!

Sincerely,



Charles Hanas
FV Sand Dollar

AFFIDAVIT OF BEN FLEENOR

STATE OF ALASKA)
) ss:
First District)

I, BEN FLEENOR, having first been duly sworn, do hereby allege and depose:

I am 69 years old and have lived in Ketchikan since

1942

The ongoing controversy concerning the management (mismanagement) of herring stocks bring to my mind certain problems relating to the actions of the State Department of Fish and Game personnel. This must be the largest and most powerful of the many State bureaucracies and it seems accountable to no one. Even our most powerful legislators are unable or unwilling to get involved with problems of inappropriate behavior, even malfeasance regarding actions of this department and individuals therein.

This department takes a lot, if not all of the credit for the relatively good salmon runs of recent years. It is curious, to me, that the first healthy returns just happened to occur the same year that the 200-mile limit went into effect.

The King Crab fishery was virtually destroyed when the department caved in to the Wakefield interests and removed the 40-pot limit back in the early 60's. This fishery may never recover to a healthy status.

Southern Southeast Alaska supported a healthy winter king salmon fishery back in the 40's and 50's. That is when there was a relatively good stock of herring throughout the area. Tagging programs then indicated that many salmon of the Stikine, Unik and Chickamin rivers never migrated but nurtured and matured in Southeast Alaska. Of course, opening these rivers to gillnetters wiped these fish out anyway. However, who's to say that, given the good populations of herring we had in those days, that those salmon, many of which are propagated by hatcheries, would not be available today. These fish would presumably be outside the quota allotted by our Canadian, Pacific Northwest troll fisheries agreement; at least the winter harvest would enhance the local economies.

More to the point, [when I suggest that there were relatively good stocks of herring in the mid 40's and through the 50's, I am only comparing this with that which I was told were enormous stocks that supported something like 100 reduction plants through Southeast Alaska.

In those days, I was among a few boats that trolled king salmon year round. We almost always looked for sizeable herring stocks before putting the gear in the water. Just a few of the sites that I recall will be noted:

Zimovia Straits - probably a square mile of herring laying off Thom's Place. They were so dense that the lines quivered when trolling through.

Hadley - the harbor was full in January.
Windfall Harbor - the same. Myers Chuck to Camano
Point, Bond Bay to Spacious Bay experienced heavy
spawning.

Spike Murphy would trap many tons of herring in his
pound, then wait until they spawned out on his pound webb,
before taking them for bait. Herring that were full of eggs
would not keep well enough to be used for bait. Spike would
complain that his webb would be so heavy with spawn, that he
would have a hard time loading it aboard the Rio Grande to
clean it up.

I also fished the other end of Behm Canal. Herring
were spawning all the way from Pt. Alava to and through
Princess Bay. Another area of heavy spawn was Sargent Bay.
Beyond that, I couldn't say as that area was closed to
trolling. I tried Kah Shakes several times as it was the site
of heavy population of herring spawning all the way through
Foggy Bay, but could never find many king salmon that would
bite.

In late fall and early winter, Tongass Narrows would
be so full of herring that my depth sounder could not
penetrate to the bottom from Channel Island off Ward Cove to
the south end of Pennock. This from shoreline to shoreline. I
have counted as many as 150 sea lions feasting in this same
area.

George Inlet, Carroll Inlet and Thorne Arm also had sizeable populations of spawning herring, these exist no longer.

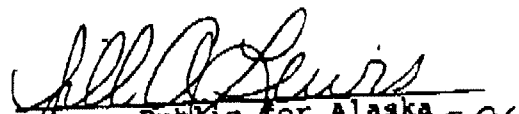
I find it incredible that Fish & Game continue to pursue this fishery into oblivion. It can only be that they have little or no criteria to base their decisions on, to say nothing of the inaccuracy of their methods of estimating the biomass, this by their own admission.

It may be too late to save the herring but at least we should try and the sooner the better in my estimation.

Dated this 19th day of March, 1993.


Ben Fleenor

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 19th day of March, 1993.


Notary Public for Alaska
Commission expires: 11-15-96

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MARCH 19, 1993

AFFIDAVIT

MY NAME IS DAVID WERNER, I AM 54 YEARS OLD. I MOVED TO SOUTH-EAST ALASKA IN 1967 AND STARTED FLYING COMMERCIALLY IN 1968. I HAVE OVER 18,000 HOURS FLYING THROUGH-OUT SOUTH-EAST ALASKA.

OVER THE YEARS I HAVE NOTICED A DRAMATIC DECLINE IN THE AMOUNT OF HERRING SPAWN FROM YEARS PAST. DURING THE LATE 1960'S THRU THE MID 1970'S I WOULD CONSISTANTLY SEE HERRING SPAWN IN ROUGHLY THE SAME AREAS AND IN THE SAME AMOUNTS FROM YEAR TO YEAR. TO ME IT IS AN EXCITING TIME OF THE YEAR AS THE THOUSANDS OF GULLS, SEA BIRDS, EAGLES, AND SEA LIONS WOULD CONVERGE IN AND AROUND THESE VAST SPAWNING AREAS.

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MARCH 19, 1993

AFFIDAVIT

I USE TO POINT OUT THIS SPECTACLE GOING ON BELOW US, TO MY PASSENGERS, BUT NOT ANYMORE, ITS A FAIRLY RARE SIGHT. AS THE HERRING FISHERIES WAS REOPENED AFTER THE HERRING REDUCTION PLANTS WERE PERMANENTLY CLOSED I HEARD WARNINGS FROM SOME CONCERNED FISHERMEN. I REMEMBERED THESE CONCERNS AND MADE IT A POINT TO WATCH THESE TRADITIONAL SPAWNING AREAS FOR ANY SIGNS OF CHANGE. IT TOOK YEARS BUT THEN I STARTED NOTICING A CHANGE FOR THE WORSE. YEARS LATER SOME AREAS TOTALLY DIED OUT. SOME OF THESE AREAS WERE NOT EVEN REMOTELY CLOSE TO A HERRING FISH OPENNING AREA.

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MARCH 19, 1993

AFFIDAVIT

I MOVED TO CORDOVA IN 1991
BUT THE DECLINE OF SPAWN
AND THE NUMBER OF SPAWNING
AREAS PRIOR TO MOVING HAS BEEN
VERY DRAMATIC TO SAY THE LEAST,
IF NOT DOWN RIGHT SCARY. THERE
IS SOMETHING VERY WRONG AND
EVEN POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS GOING
ON WITH THE HERRING POPULATIONS
IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA FOR ME TO
BE WITNESSING THESE DRAMATIC
CHANGES. THIS SITUATION NEEDS
IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.

SINCERELY

John K. Stary

David Wemmer

Notary Public In and For The State of Alaska Box 1092

My Commission Expires: 12-12-94 CORDOVA, AK 99574

PH. 424-5551

To : Alaska Department of Fish and Game

I moved to Sitka, Alaska in 1939 when I was 22 years old. I have now lived here in Sitka for 73 years 45 of them right on the water and I can "**Clearly**" remember when the "**Herring stocks where healthy**". After they spawned the roe was over 12" deep on the beaches everywhere. Did you know that Silver Bay got it's name from the herring! It's been "**several years**" since there has been any herring or spawn in Silver Bay, Jamestown Bay, Redoubt Bay, Gotterd Bay, Whale Bay just to name a few. Based on Historical facts and over 73 years of personal observation I would say that our S.E. Herring stocks are in "**Great Danger of Collapse**". The herring stocks in Alaska are the foundation/heart of or resource and it is very critical to properly manage them and do not allow "**Over Harvest**" to the point of no return like Lynn Cannell, Hoonah, Auke Bay, Tenakee, Ketchikan, Craig Etc.. Just take a good look at history the farther back you go the more healthy our herring stocks where. Do you think there is a connection that the fact that our herring stocks are at **very low levels** and the salmon and halibut fishing is on the decline? for the past several years. The king salmon stocks where so low this past 2008 season ADF&G closed the king salmon fishing right in the middle of the season. The silver salmon and halibut fishing in and around the Sitka area has "clearly" dropped off in the past several years and the low herring stocks would play a big factor. Even if the salmon and halibut stocks where healthy**how would they survive with no-herring/feed?**

It is a well known that "**Commercial Over Harvest**" is the main reason that Lynn Cannell, Kake, Ketchikan, West Beam Cannell, Hoonah, Auke Bay, Tennakee, Silver Bay, Jamestown Bay have never recovered and it has been several years since there has been any spawn there at all.

I am deeply concerned that if you do not allow our "Herring Stocks to Recover" we will not have a resource at all!

Albert F Richter

I am 74 years old. I was born and raised in Sitka, Alaska. I began subsistence herring egg fishing in 1975. I would lay branches in front of Big Gavanski, Little Gavanski, Middle Island, all the way on to the other end of town by Pirate's Cove and Samsing Cove. I would do well laying branches in these areas. Since 1975 I have noticed a steady decline of herring, and in some places the herring are no longer returning; just as they have quit returning to Goddard Hot Springs and even Redoubt Bay due to over fishing of the herring stock. Furthermore, since the commercial fishing boats have been allowed to come into inside waters, there is hardly any herring spawn along Halibut Point Road, or into Thompson Harbor, as there used to be.

The Fish and Game tell us that the herring biomass is just moving around, but they're not. They're being fished out. I believe that even when the test sets are made, to monitor the herring fishing that, when released, roughly one third of the herring in the test set go straight to the bottom of the ocean, wasted, every test set.

I believe there is a need to reduce the allowed tonnage of herring fishing caught commercially, or possibly even stop the commercial herring fishing for a few years. We also need to include the herring caught in the test sets into the total tonnage caught thus giving us a more accurate depiction of the remaining uncaught herring in the biomass. We need to do this if we want to save the tradition of herring fishing for future generations, and protect the marine ecosystem.

Glenn G. Howard Sr.

